

18 - 242/63
18 September 1963
Copy 4 of 8

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Manufacturing and Services Division, ORR

ATTENTION :

FROM : Chief, CIA/PID (NPIC)

SUBJECT : Lhasa-Tsona Dzong Road

REFERENCES : (a) Requirement No. ORR/302/62
(b) Project No. C 1121/62

1. This memorandum is in response to the referenced requirement requesting:

a. The preparation of annotated maps and text indicating the alignment and condition of the road connecting Lhasa (29 39N - 91 06E) to Tsona Dzong (27 59N - 91 59E).

b. Indicate any roads in the area which appear to be under construction or recently completed.

c. Describe any roads leading from China into India.

2. The Lhasa-Tsona Dzong Road, the principal supply route into the NEFA plain from Lhasa, proceeds southwest from Lhasa along the west bank of the Gya Chu (River) through Chasul Dzong (29 23N - 90 44E). Just south of Chasul Dzong the road crosses the Brahmaputra River by means of a long pontoon bridge at Chaksam Gompa (29 20N - 90 42E), and proceeds eastward along the south shore of the Brahmaputra (Tsangpo) River to Tsetang (29 15N - 91 46E). Here the road turns sharply southward through Dagyelung G (28 58N - 91 54E), Kankang Pass (28 43N - 92 05E), Tsona Dzong, and through the Bum La Pass (27 44N - 91 54E), into the NEFA Plain.

3. The section between Lhasa and Tsetang is a two lane, graded, earth surface road probably reinforced with gravel or crushed stone. The section between Tsetang southward through Tsona Dzong is a single-lane improved road. The width of this road widens to two-lanes for short stretches; however, it must be considered as single-lane.

Declass Review by NGA.

4. The Lhasa to Tsonga Dzong road appears to have most major streams bridged; however, some small streams are not bridged and the bridges that were visible appeared to be of lighter construction than those found between Ch'ang-tu and Lhasa and other main supply routes into Tibet from China.

5. Southwestward from Tsonga Dzong, a well defined, but narrow (single-lane) road proceeds through Trima (27 52N - 91 54E) and connects with the main road at 27 26N - 91 54N. This road would provide an important alternate route for the main road into the border area and; although it does have many steep grades, sharp curves, and several series of switchbacks, the road appeared well maintained.

6. Important branch roads are as follows:

a. Chitishio (29 16N - 91 10E) to Lhakhang Dz (28 04N - 91 03E). This road appears to be very poor between Chitishio and Palti Tso (Lake). Eastward to Trigu Tso, although there does not appear to be any improvement made to the road surface, the terrain is so level and the earth surface so smooth, that the road would have to be considered a good supply route. There are very few heavy grades, sharp curves and no switchbacks observed on this section. The road skirts the west shore of Trigu Tso (Lake), then turns southwestward to Lhaklang Dz. This section of the road follows generally in river valleys and, although it traverses very rugged terrain, the road does not have a great number of sharp curves, steep grades or switchbacks. This section of the Chitishio-Lhakhang Dz road appears to be a much better road than the northern section. The roadbed has had considerable work and sections of this road approached two lanes in width. South of Lhakhang to the India border the road is unimproved-little better than a pack-animal trail.

b. Another supply route proceeding into the border area from the main - Lhasa to Tsonga Dzong - road, is a road connecting Daggyeling G (28 58N - 91 54E) with Asafilia (28 22N - 93 15E). This road runs generally into river valleys, high mountainous plateaus and inter-mountain basins. There are several long stretches through mountain passes where traffic would be slowed-down and loads limited by steep grades, sharp curves and switchbacks. There is a stretch of approximately 25 miles between Sang Choling G (28 33N - 93 00E), where the road shows a great deal of construction work. This 25 mile section is two-lane in width over much of its route and appears to be well maintained. This road, together with the alternate road leading from the main (Lhasa-Tsonga Dzong) road provide considerable supply-potential into this border sector.

c. All other roads are plotted on map CIA/PID/IB-P-522/63. The map legend explains the condition of the road. Secondary or unimproved roads in this area sometimes provide better supply routes than do improved roads. In many cases, roads are improved only where they

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cross through difficult terrain. Although the road surface may be well defined on photography, the improved road has heavy grades, sharp curves and switchbacks; whereas, the unimproved road, traversing high mountainous plateaus, river valleys or level inter-mountain basins with their hard-packed, well-drained soil needs little or no improvements to provide a better than adequate supply route.

7. This project is considered completed. The photo analyst on the project was [REDACTED], who may be contacted on [REDACTED] should you have further questions regarding this project.

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ENCLOSURES:

1 annotated map CIA/PID/IB-P-922/63

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